DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
STATEMENT OF CAPTAIN DOUGLAS GRUBBS
ON
PILOTAGE AND PORT SECURITY
BEFORE THE
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION AND MERCHANT MARINE
SUBCOMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
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Good afternoon Senator Breaux and members of the Committee. I am Captain Douglas Grubbs of the Crescent River Port Pilots Association in New Orleans and head of the pilots' Vessel Traffic System program. I also sit on the Lower Mississippi Safety Advisory Committee and serve as the official liaison between the Crescent Pilots' Association and the United States Congress.

Since Sept. 11, everyone involved in maritime commerce along the Lower Mississippi River has been on heightened alert -- watching for suspicious activity, or indeed anything out of the ordinary. This heightened state of watchfulness must translate into what Admiral Loy has termed a "new normalcy." We cannot afford to drift again into vulnerable complacency. This means that emergency measures must become standard operating procedure, that complete, accurate, real-time situational information must be readily available to both operators and law enforcement personnel, and that maritime personnel learn how to identify and respond to potential threats quickly and efficiently.

My purpose here today is to discuss how the current system of vessel pilotage can be used to enhance our maritime security and how Louisiana State pilots have and will continue to work hand-in-hand with Coast Guard and other state and federal law enforcement agencies to safeguard the property, welfare and lives of the people of Louisiana. Effective port security requires a true partnership among all the entities, both public and private who utilize and serve this waterway. The Coast Guard and the pilots embarked upon this public/private partnership

long before Sept. 11, working together since 1990 to develop an AIS-based VTS system here in New Orleans. Once fully developed, this system will serve as a model for other ports around the nation, and in fact, the world.

The combined ports of the Lower Mississippi River represent the largest port complex in the world. Each year there are about 400,000 total vessel movements along this 264 mile stretch of commercial waterway extending from the Gulf of Mexico to Baton Rouge. Approximately 37,000 of those movements are deep draft vessels carrying grain, coal, steel, petrochemicals and a host of other commodities and products vital to both the domestic and international economies. A terrorist attack along the Lower Mississippi River would not only endanger significant urban population centers and commercial property, it would also have far reaching and devastating impact around the world. The region's vulnerability and importance could make it a very attractive target to anyone seeking maximum impact from a single destructive act.

Pilots take this threat seriously and personally. We want to do everything we can, and cooperate in every way possible to insure that nothing like Sept. 11 happens here.

The pilot aboard a vessel has immediate, first-hand knowledge of the vessel's situation and is in the best possible position to notice a potential problem while there is still time to avert disaster. The Coast Guard relies upon pilots to provide accurate and timely information about vessels and their immediate surroundings. Today, pilots accomplish this task using visual contact, radar and VHF radios. As you know, radar cannot see around points and bends and VHF radios are prone to intermodulation interference. While pilots are currently in the best position to relay this information, they cannot afford to be distracted from their immediate task -- which often means navigating a heavily laden vessel carrying hazardous cargo through congested stretches of river with tricky currents and weather conditions.

Three factors have and will continue to contribute greatly to both the pilots' and the Coast Guard's ability to maintain a careful and protective watch over this critical stretch of waterway: additional manpower, education and enhanced technology.

After Sept. 11, the Captain of the Port instituted a sea marshal program in which all arriving vessels are screened through a High Interest Vessel matrix. A team of armed sea marshals boards each vessel which, by virtue of its cargo, country of origin or other factor, is deemed to merit special attention. The sea marshals are specially trained Coast Guard reservists who can respond immediately to potential threats. During the month of Ramadan, these sea marshals rode High Interest Vessels all the way from the sea buoy to Baton Rouge. Since then, the marshals have concentrated on vessels in the New Orleans harbor.

The pilots have worked closely with the Coast Guard around-the-clock to facilitate the sea marshal program by providing logistical support, housing and transportation. The Crescent River Port Pilots have also made their extensive and comprehensive vessel data-base available to the Vessel Traffic Center to facilitate cross referencing vessel movements.

River pilots have extensive expertise and experience piloting vessels up and down this river, but we are not terrorism experts, military tacticians, psychologists or law enforcement officers. In order to identify *truly* suspicious activity, we need to know what to look for. We also need to have a strategic plan in place that tells us how to respond should a threat arise. Louisiana state pilots are very concerned with education and have implemented one of the most extensive continuing education programs in the country. Now we are working with the Louisiana State Police and the Coast Guard to develop a Pilot Anti-Terrorism course which will be incorporated into our already existing continuing education program.

Education and additional manpower both rely upon human observation and ability. In the best of all possible worlds, critical situational information would be gathered and disseminated automatically, in real-time, reducing the possibility of human error and mechanical limitations. That is precisely the purpose of the AIS-based VTS system under development here in New Orleans. This satellite-based technology will be able to see around points and bends in all weather, and will use it's own private FCC assigned frequencies thus being subject to far less interference. With minimal user input, this system will provide real-time, accurate vessel information, including the vessel's name, the pilot's name, ship's location, speed, heading,

cargo, etc., in both ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore mode to other vessels as well as to the Vessel Traffic Center and even Coast Guard headquarters in Washington, D.C. In this way both operators and law enforcement officials will have real-time access to all pertinent information regarding hazardous cargo moving along the Lower Mississippi River.

This AIS technology will have an immediate impact on the Coast Guard's ability to identify and track hazardous cargo moving throughout the ports of the lower Mississippi River. The infrastructure is in place. The public/private partnership between pilots and the Coast Guard has been tested and it works. The VTC is operational in it's beginning stages, and the AIS technology is ready to go. Once approved and budgeted, 100 AIS transponders can be providing greater security to the Lower Mississippi River within 90 days.

I urge you to lend your support to the efforts of the United States Coast Guard and the ports of the Lower Mississippi River to provide the resources and technology to make this River safe and secure.